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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 4, 1997

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**STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE CURT WELDON
CHAIRMAN, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE**

**FEDERAL RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC TERRORISM INVOLVING WEAPONS OF
MASS DESTRUCTION - STATUS OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPPORT
PROGRAM**

November 4, 1997

Today, the Research and Development Subcommittee meets to receive testimony on the federal government's response to the threat of domestic terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction and the status of the support provided by the Department of Defense and the Department of Energy, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Federal Emergency Planning Agency.

This is the third hearing by this subcommittee since March 1996 that has addressed the threat posed to the United States and U.S. citizens by terrorism, the potential for terrorist use of nuclear, chemical, or biological materials, and the need for improvements in the capabilities of emergency first responders and in the overall capability of federal, state, and local emergency response agencies to respond to and mitigate the effect of such incidents. As represented by the bombings of the World Trade Center and the Oklahoma City Federal Building, which used conventional explosives, and the nerve agent attack by the Aum Shrinrikyo in the Tokyo subway system, the threat of terrorist attack by agents of international terrorism, or by others acting independently is very real.

Title XIV of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1997 required the President to take immediate action to enhance the capability of the federal government to prevent and respond to terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction, and to provide enhanced support to improve the capabilities of state and local emergency response agencies to prevent and respond to such incidents. Today's hearing is the first formal review by the Congress of the President's response to that direction and the establishment of the domestic preparedness program. We hope to gain an understanding of the interagency coordination and planning regarding the establishment of the program, and the actions taken to date to provide emergency response training and assistance, response testing and improvement, and other support to federal state and local agencies that are mandated in Title XIV. The understanding we gain today will provide the members of the Research and Development subcommittee a baseline for reviewing continuing actions by the Administration and the President's budget request for support of the program when we receive the fiscal year 1999 budget request next January.

We are pleased to have as our lead-off witness, today, the Honorable Ike Skelton, Member of Congress from the State of Missouri, who will testify regarding the recent review by the General Accounting Office, that he sponsored, of U.S. efforts to combat terrorism. Following his testimony, we would be pleased to have Congressman Skelton join the subcommittee for the remainder of the hearing.

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